

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-07 IGA-02 AGRE-00 /085 W
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R 011020Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2833
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 6107

COLOMBO FOR DEP ASST SEC DUBS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, OTRA, BG, IN, US
SUBJECT: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS' TALKS IN DACCA

1. SUMMARY. DURING HIS NOVEMBER 28-30 VISIT TO DACCA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE AMBASSADOR, HAD TALKS WITH THE THREE DEPUTY CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATORS AS WELL AS THE ACTING FOREIGN SECRETARY AND BANGLADESH'S TOP ECONOMIC PLANNER. IN ALL THESE DISCUSSIONS BDG OFFICIALS SAID THEY WILL HAVE A SERIOUS GO AT NEGOTIATIONS ON FARAKKA BUT DOUBT INDIA WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY FORTHCOMING TO ENABLE A SETTLEMENT TO BE REACHED. THEY DID NOT BELIEVE INDIA HAS ADJUSTED TO THE CHANGES IN AUGUST AND NOVEMBER 1975 AND THINK THE GOI IS TRYING TO DESTABILIZE BANGLADESH BY MANIPULATING GANGES WATER AND STEPPING UP BORDER INCURSIONS. ALL BDG OFFICIALS EXPRESSED DEEP APPRECIATION FOR U.S. HELP AND HOPED IT WOULD CONTINUE. TWO OF THE THREE DEPUTY CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATORS GAVE THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT MARTIAL LAW
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IS HERE TO STAY FOR SOME TIME. DUBS SAID WE SUPPORT

BANGLADESH'S INDEPENDENCE, RESPECT ITS CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY AND SINCERELY HOPE THE NATION SUCCEEDS IN ITS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. TOGETHER WITH OTHER DONORS, WE ARE READY TO CONTINUE TO HELP. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES DISCUSSIONS WITH ALL MAJOR BDG OFFICIALS EXCEPT ZIA, WHICH IS REPORTED SEPTEL.

2. AIR VICE MARTIAL MANMOOD, DEPUTY CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR IN CHARGE OF FOOD, NATURAL GAS AND CIVIL AVIATION, TOLD DUBS THAT BANGLADESH IS UNDERDEVELOPED ECONOMICALLY BUT OVERLY DEVELOPED POLITICALLY. THE PRESENT MILITARY GROUP HAD ASSUMED CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITY IN NOVEMBER 1975 RELUCTANTLY BECAUSE OF THE TOTAL BREAKDOWN OF CIVILIAN AUTHORITY. THE ELECTIONS WERE ALSO POSTPONED RELUCTANTLY BECAUSE IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE PROLIFERATION OF PARTIES WOULD LEAD TO A SITUATION IN WHICH ACHIEVING THE NATION'S ESSENTIAL ECONOMIC GOALS WOULD BE SERIOUSLY THREATENED. THE MILITARY LEADERS IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAVE TRAVELLED WIDELY WITHIN BANGLADESH. THEY SAMPLED THE VIEWS OF ALL SECTORS AND WERE CONVINCED THAT THERE WAS A BROAD CONSENSUS AGAINST HOLDING NATIONAL ELECTIONS AT THIS TIME. UNION COUNCIL ELECTIONS WOULD GO AHEAD IN JANUARY, TO BE FOLLOWED BY ELECTIONS AT THE THANA (COUNTY) LEVEL. THEY WOULD THEN HAVE A BETTER IDEA WHEN NATIONAL ELECTIONS WOULD BE POSSIBLE. MAHMOOD EMPHASIZED HIS VIEW THAT THE WAY POWER IS TURNED BACK TO CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO THIS EFFECTIVELY IN A WAY WHICH ENSURES SUCCESS FOR THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION.

3. MAHMOOD NOTED ALSO THAT HE WELCOMED OBJECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS INTO BANGLADESH'S FOOD STORAGE SITUATION. HE FELT THE ROUSSEAU REPORT EXAGGERATED THE SITUATION SINCE HE IS CONVINCED THAT SPOILAGE WAS FAR LESS THAN 200,000 TONS. HOWEVER, HE SAID, ANY SPOILAGE IS BAD AND THE BDG HOPES TO HOLD THIS TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. TOWARD THIS END THEY ARE TRYING, WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP, TO IMPROVE STORAGE FACILITIES AND ARE PERMITTING PRIVATE TRADERS TO RE-ENTER THE FOODGRAIN MARKET IN ORDER TO INCREASE STORAGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AND REDUCE THE STRAIN ON CENTAL FACILITIES.

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4. MAHMOOD THANKED DUBS FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE AND SOPKE PARTICULARLY FAVORABLY ABOUT THE FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAM. HE THEN ASKED IF THERE WEREN'T SOME WAY WE COULD HELP IMPROVE THE LOCAL AIRLINE, BANGLADESH BIMAN. AS A YOUNG PAKISTANI AIR FORCE OFFICER, HE WAS AWARE OF THE CONTRIBUTION PAN-AM HAD MADE TO PIA. BANGLADESH BIMAN DESPERATELY NEEDED TECHNICAL ADVICE, PERSONNEL TRAINING ABROAD AND THE CREATION

OF TRAINING FACILITIES WITHIN THE COUNTRY. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD GET BACK TO MAHMOOD ON THIS AFTER CHECKING IT OUT.

5. ACTING FOREIGN SECRETARY M.A. CHOUDHURY, REPLYING TO A QUESTION, SAID BANGLADESH'S MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVE IS SURVIVAL. THIS, HOWEVER, IS ENDANGERED BY INDIA. CHOUDHURY DISCUSSED IN SOME DETAIL HIS VIEW THAT INDIA DID NOT ACCEPT PARTITION OF THE SUBCONTINENT IN 1947 AND DID NOT LIKE THE INDEPENDENT STAND TAKEN BY THE PRESENT BDG. IT MUCH PREFERRED A "CLIENT" RELATIONSHIP. FOR THESE REASONS INDIA WAS BRINGING PRESSURE ON BANGLADESH THROUGH FARAKKA AND STEPPED-UP BORDER INCURSIONS. THESE INCURSIONS WERE, HOWEVER, DONE IN A LIMITED AND CONTROLLED MANNER--JUST A SIGNAL, HE SAID. REGARDING FARAKKA, CHOUDHURY SAID BANGLADESH YIELDED TO PRESSURE FROM THE NON-ALIGNED GROUP AND "OTHER FRIENDS" AND WITHDREW ITS RESOLUTION. THEY BELIEVE THE RESOLUTION WOULD PASS BUT THERE WOULD BE MANY ABSTENTIONS. IN ANY EVENT, IT COULD NOT BE ENFORCED. CHOUDHURY DID, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT THEY HAD SUCCEEDED IN FOCUSING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION ON THE PROBLEM AND HAD GAINED A GOOD DEAL OF MORAL SUPPORT. THE SPOTLIGHT IS NOW ON INDIA.

6. DR. MIRZA NURAL HUDA, MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF ADVISORS TO THE PRESIDENT IN CHARGE OF ECONOMIC PLANNING, OUTLINED BANGLADESH'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS DURING A HALF-HOUR DISCUSSION. HUDA GAVE TOP PRIORITY, IN THIS ORDER, TO POPULATION CONTROL, INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL-BASED INDUSTRIES AND EDUCATION. HE ALSO OUTLINED THE BDG'S PLANS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INCENTIVES TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR (SEE SEPTTEL REPORTING ZIA'S COMMENTS). HUDA EXPRESSED GREAT APPRECIATION FOR OUR ECONOMIC SUPPORT. WITHOUT POINTING THE FINGER AT

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ANYONE IN PARTICULAR, HE SAID THERE WERE CERTAINLY SHORT-COMINGS IN BANGLADESH'S ABILITY TO UTILIZE AID, BUT IT HAD BECOME APPARENT TO HIM AT THE LAST PARIS MEETING THAT SOME OF THE DONORS ALSO NEEDED TO CONSIDER WAYS TO SPEED-UP THEIR OWN ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 DACCA 6107

COLOMBO FOR DEP ASST SEC DUBS

7. ADMIRAL M. H. KHAN, DEPUTY CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED THE PREVIOUS DAY FROM NEW YORK, SAW DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS AND THE AMBASSADOR ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 30. PREOCCUPIED STILL WITH THE FARAKKA PROBLEM, KHAN SAID HE COULD SEE SOME "LIGHT" ON THIS ISSUE, BUT A SOLUTION DEPENDED ON WHETHER INDIA WOULD TAKE A REALISTIC VIEW OF WHAT IS AN "EQUITABLE" ALLOCATION OF WATER. HE HAD SOME INDICATION THAT THE INDIANS WERE THINKING OF SPLITTING THE WATER FIFTY-FIFTY AT HARDINGE BRIDGE. THIS WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO BANGLADESH. THE PROBLEM, HE SAID, IS NOT AT HARDINGE BRIDGE BUT AT FARAKKA. THIS, KHAN STRESSED, IS WHERE MEASUREMENTS MUST BE TAKEN. AND WHERE A FORMULA MUST BE WORKED OUT.

8. WHEN DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS AND THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THE NEED FOR THE TWO NATIONS TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, KHAN REITERATED THAT THIS DEPENDED ON THE INDIAN APPROACH. ADEQUATE WATER WAS A MATTER OF SURVIVAL FOR BANGLADESH. THEY WOULD BE COOPERATIVE BUT
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THERE WERE LIMITS ON HOW FAR THEY COULD GO. DUBS ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR A LONGER TERM OF AND SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF WATER UTILIZATION IN THE GANGES BASIN INVOLVING INDIA, BANGLADESH, AND NEPAL. KHAN SAID BANGLADESH WAS

FULLY PREPARED TO COOPERATE IN SUCH AN EFFECT WITH THE IBRD OR ANYONE ELSE AS LONG AS "ALL ASPECTS" OF THE PROBLEM WERE CONSIDERED (I.E., A LINK CANAL BETWEEN THE BRAHMAPUTRA AND GANGES COULD NOT BE A PRECONDITION). HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT CERTAIN INDIA WOULD GO ALONG WITH SUCH A STUDY.

9. DURING THE DISCUSSION KHAN SUFACED WHAT HE CALLED A "DRAFT WHITE PAPER" ON INDIA-INSPIRED INCURSIONS INTO BANGLADESH. HE SAID BANGLADESH HAD DOCUMENTED THE FACT THAT INCLUDED AMONG THE "MISCREANTS" WERE INDIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL. THE BDG APPARENTLY DOES NOT PLAN TO RELEASE THIS REPORT AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER IT SEES HOW THE NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS GO.

10. IN A BROADER CONTEXT, KHAN COMPLAINED THAT THE U.S. SEEMS TO ENVISAGE SOME SORT OF "BIG BROTHER" ROLE FOR INDIA IN SOUTH ASIA. DEP ASST SEC DUBS AND THE AMBASSADOR BATTED THIS DOWN WITH THE ARGUMENT THAT OUR OBJECTIVE IS STABILITY IN SOUTH ASIA. WE ARE NOT PARTIAL TOWARD ANY COUNTRY AND DO NOT ENVISAGE A REGIONAL ROLE FOR ANYONE. WE WILL AVOID ACTIONS WHICH WOULD ADD TO FRICTIONS AMONG THE NATIONS IN THE AREA.

11. COMMENT. ZIA DID NOT MENTION BANGLADESH'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT ON CONCESSIONAL TERMS. KHAN TOUCHED ON IT ONLY BRIEFLY FOR THE RECORD. THE MESSAGE SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH. FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENT, SEE DACCA 6103 (NOTAL).
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